

WHEN NEWARK WAS YOUNGER



Early view of old County Court House shows stage coach turning toward Orange.

Old Roads Made

THERE is a forgotten road east of Branch Brook Park where Heller Parkway crosses. Old timers will recognize it as the old Bloomfield road, and recall, too, the rambling brownstone Sydenham house beside it. Running diagonally northwest the old road, may be known by the tall trees which arch over it. Not that much of it may be distinguished at this date; it's easy grade is evident in Mt. Prospect place but between there and the park it takes a good imagination and a knowledge of old maps to figure out its course.

The late Edward S. Rankin, civil engineer and author of "Indian Trails and City Streets," knew more about Newark roads than any one else. He said that the old Bloomfield road began at the stone bridge on First River (now Clay street) and ran along the present course of Broadway to Second avenue where it turned uphill toward the northwest. It may have been an Indian trail, and it was in later years a favorite route for Sunday drivers and log walks in the woods.

Winding courses and gentle grades are characteristics of all old roads of Newark that date back to Indian days. Oldest of all highways leading from the Four Corners was the Old Crane road, described by Newark road surveyors in 1705 as a "path" already existing. If one walks from the front of the Court House, once the watering place, up West Market street to Warren and there board the No. 21 trolley for Orange, he is following closely this ancient road.

CATTLE were driven over this path to be pastured as a herd on First Mountain and families from the Mountain traveled over it to church, to market, or to visit relatives. In those days people walked distances that would horrify

Newarkers of today. Heavy burdens were carried on shoulder yokes, in saddle bags on horse back, or on crude sledges drawn by oxen. As the trails were widened into rough roads, crude carts were built. When enterprising Newarkers developed iron mines in Morris and Passaic counties, trains of pack animals came down the roads leading into Newark from the North and West.

Even when people began to travel greater distances in the 1700s, regularly scheduled trips were made in rude farm wagons, with board seats laid crosswise, over which passengers had to climb in and out. In the same sort of wagons provisions poured into Newark markets

pelled by a horse in a sort of treadmill on the shore. Later they were moved by chains on a windlass.

THE Old Road to the Ferry, shown on the famous Shoe-maker Map of 1806, is also referred to as the Old Plank Road, for it was planked with sawn timber in 1849 at a time when this type of toll road was rapidly taking the place of the old corduroy roads and turnpikes.

Toll was charged until late in the 19th Century when the charter expired. When the Old Plank Road became a part of the Lincoln Highway, an old photo which accompanied the story of its opening in The Newark News of 1913 showed on the Passaic

Highways and Streets Grew From Indian Trails Used by Settlers as Avenues of Travel and Commerce

By Miriam Stedley

Principal New Jersey History Librarian, Newark Public Library

from the farm lands far to the West. The stage coaches familiar to us in pictures did not become common until near the Revolution.

For a long time people and freight coming into Newark from the country transferred at the Passaic River bank to boats. Small sailing vessels went directly to New York, but about 1765 ferries were built across the Passaic and Hackensack rivers, and roads to link them with Newark and New York, which was from earliest days connected by a ferry with the Jersey shore.

These ferries did not in the least resemble modern ferry boats. Simple flat bottomed boats or scows were pulled across the rivers by ropes attached to the banks, or pro-

River bridge a huge sign, "Drive your horses not faster than a walk."

The road that was built in 1794 when the bridge was erected near the present Public Library building was, like the original Old Ferry Road, a corduroy road, that is, one made of logs laid down across the marshes. Quaking and jolting and in fear of the robbers who hid in the cedar forest then covering the Meadows, the travelers on this road did not have a happy time of it even though the stage owners called their rude wagons "Flying Machines."

Nevertheless, regular trips were made and were advertised in the early newspapers of New York and Newark.

These highways, an im-

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LEGAL RATES OF TOLLS

Wagon drawn by one horse	6
each additional horse	6
Sleigh or Sled drawn by one horse	6
each additional horse	4
Horse and Rider	4
Horses, Cattle or Mules in driver seat	1
Cow, Sheep & Swine, each	1
Keep to the right as the law directs	

Pictured at left is sign which listed legal rate of toll gate on Bloomfield avenue, near Fourth street. This was a more direct route than the old Bloomfield



road, traces of which may be seen beside the Sydenham house shown at right. Built around 1760, the west side of the building faces Branch Brook Park.

City the Hub of Jersey

provement over the make-shift dirt roads that grew from the Indian trails, would never have been possible without private enterprise. In the earliest days, of course, all the able men and boys were required to contribute a certain number of days of work building and repairing the roads each year. In 1705, a number of roads were built, but they were constructed by the labor of the land-owners themselves.

WHEN the Newark bridge and the turnpike leading from it were built in 1794, funds were raised by a state-authorized lottery and a turnpike company was formed which employed an engineer and skilled labor in the work. In 1806 and 1811 several turnpike companies were incorporated, building roads to Morristown, Camptown (now Irvington), Springfield, Pompton and Elizabethtown (now Elizabeth). All these roads had toll gates, of which there were several in Newark, one in Bloomfield avenue, another in Clinton avenue, another at Morris and Springfield avenues.

The old road from Newark to Elizabethtown, built in 1705, was the first county road, using a route originally part of the Indian trail which led from the Raritan through Newark and Belleville to Acquackanonk. But not until 1868, when the Essex County Road Board was created, did the county acquire the system of private highways radiating west from Newark. In 1881 the Board of Chosen Freeholders took over the roads.

By 1868 a new means of transportation had developed—the horse car railroad. But the horse cars—and the railways—are another matter, and we shall have to leave the story of rapid transit for a date.



NEW LINE OF STAGES.

Copies of two advertisements bidding for public patronage in travel. One at left is from "Sentinel of Freedom and New Jersey Advertiser" of May 1, 1827, and steam coach from "Pierson's Directory of the City of Newark for 1842-43."



MORRIS AND ESSEX RAILROAD

This road was chartered January 25th, 1828, and the Company commenced running their Cars by horse power from Newark to Orange, November 25th, 1828. From Orange to Morris, January 1st, 1829.



ABOVE: A turnpike grows up—Springfield avenue at Belmont in horse and buggy days. The road was started by the Springfield and Newark company around 1806.

BELOW: Victorias continued in use in Newark as late as World War I and in 1916 ex-Mayor Haussling led Broad street parade of Road Horse Association.

